

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 045477

O 311220Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4260

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 2128

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, JO,XF

SUBJECT: SENATOR MCGOVERN'S TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI

1. SUMMARY. PRIME MINISTER RIFAI DISCUSSED THE RESULTS OF THE ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING IN CAIRO, LOOKED AT THE FUTURE OF NEGOTIATIONS, PROPOSED A POSSIBLE MEETING OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL, WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT GENEVA, AND OUTLINED SOME IDEAS ABOUT THE EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK. HE ALSO PROVIDED THE SENATOR WITH DETAILS OF HIS APPROACH TO OTHER ARAB FOREIGN MINISTERS ON FUNDING THE UNRWA DEFICIT THROUGH INCREASED CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNESCO AND REPORTED THAT THIS APPROACH HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY THE OTHER ARABS AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED AT A RECONVENED ARAB LEAGUE SESSION BEFORE THE END OF THE MONTH OF APRIL.
END SUMMARY.

2. SENATOR MCGOVERN ACCOMPANIED BY ASSISTANTS TILLMAN AND BARON TOGETHER WITH AMBASSADOR MET WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI FOR ABOUT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES AFTERNOON MARCH 30.

3. RIFAI TALKED AT SOME LENGTH ABOUT THE CAIRO ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING. HE

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NOTED ONLY ONE ITEM HAD BEEN COVERED ON THE AGENDA.

HE SAID THAT THE DEPTH OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT WAS APPARENT FROM THE ACTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTERS. HE SAID AS WELL THAT MAY IF NOT ALL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS SUSPECTED THAT THERE WAS SOME U.S.-EGYPTIAN COLLUSION IN THE SECRETARY'S SUSPENSION OF HIS MISSION. HE DID NOT HIMSELF ACCEPT THIS AND ARGUED STRONGLY AGAINST IT. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT THE EGYPTIANS HAD NOT BEEN TERRIBLY HELPFUL IN ALLAYING THESE SUSPICIONS AND THAT PRESIDENT SADAT'S SPEECH MARCH 29 HAD ALSO FURTHER CONTRIBUTED TO THE FEAR ON THE PART OF THE OTHER ARABS THAT EGYPT WAS STILL READY AND WILLING, INDEED EAGER TO GO IT ALONE.

4. RIFAI ALSO DISCUSSED THE REACTION OF JORDAN AND STATES IN THE AREA TO THE PRESENT U.S. CONGRESSIONAL STANCE ON VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. HE SAID TO THE SENATOR: I WANT TO TALK BLUNTLY. WE CAN HAVE NO REAL FAITH IN U.S. COMMITMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST IF U.S. COMMITMENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD SEEM TO BE IGNORED OR REVOKED BY THE CONGRESS. WE HAVE BEEN YOUR LONGEST-TERM ALLY IN THE AREA AND WE CANNOT DRAW MUCH HOPE AND CONFIDENCE FROM WHAT IS HAPPENING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, TURKEY, ETC. THE SENATOR SAID THAT HE ALSO WANTED TO TALK BLUNTLY. HE HOPED THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD REALIZE THERE WERE ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST. IN SOUTHEAST ASIA WE HAD UNDERTAKEN A COMMITMENT WHICH WE SHOULD NEVER HAVE ATTEMPTED IN THE FIRST PLACE. WE HAD BEEN INVOLVED WITH TROOPS AND BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN A SITUATION WHERE WE COULD NOT WIN. IT WAS A CIVIL WAR BETWEEN VIETNAMESE INTO WHICH WE HAD ASSERTED OURSELVES AND CONDITIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WERE NOT THE SAME. THE MIDDLE EAST FOR THE NEXT DECADE WOULD BE THE FOCAL POINT FOR U.S. POLICY. RIFAI SAID THAT HE RESPECTED THE SENATOR'S RIGHT TO MAKE A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TWO AREAS, BUT HE COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT. IN ADDITION, OUR AID TO ISRAEL WAS REALLY ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE PROBLEM WITH

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THE CONGRESS. EVERY TIME JORDAN LOOKED AROUND, ISRAEL SEEMED TO BE GETTING MORE AND MORE MONEY, MORE AND MORE EQUIPMENT, MORE AND MORE ECONOMIC SUPPORT. JORDAN SEEMED TO BE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LIST IN COMPARISON WITH ISRAEL; FOR EXAMPLE, THE DELIVERY OF EQUIPMENT FROM INVENTORIES. IN ADDITION, IT WAS THIS ALMOST MINDLESS U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE ISRAELIS THAT MADE THINGS SO DIFFICULT WHEN IT CAME TO THE

NECESSITY FOR INDUCING SOME FLEXIBILITY INTO THEIR
POSITION.

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4261

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 2128

EXDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR

5. THE DISCUSSION CONTINUED COVERING WHAT MIGHT
HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE. THE PRIME MINISTER REPEATED
IN SUCCINT FORM JORDAN'S IDEAS THAT THE UN
SECURITY COUNCIL MIGHT PROVIDE A USEFUL FORUM
IN WHICH TO DISCUSS AND DETERMINE THE MODALITIES
FOR THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. HE DID NOT HOLD OUT
MUCH HOPE FOR THE CONFERENCE, BUT SAW THE SECURITY
COUNCIL AS AN EASIER PLACE TO GET THE APPROPRIATE
PARTIES TOGETHER WITHOUT HAVING TO FACE THE QUESTION OF
WHETHER OR NOT THE ISRAELIS WOULD ACCEPT THE PLO.
HE TOLD THE SENATOR THE SYRIANS WERE ALREADY PREPARING
TO EXPEL THE ISRAELIS FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND
THAT, IN THE WORDS OF FONMIN KHADDAM, THEY WERE PREPARED
TO HOUND THE ISRAELIS AROUND THE WORLD UNTIL THEY
SAW REASON.

6. THE SENATOR ASKED RIFAI ABOUT THE UNRWA DEFICIT
AND WHAT COULD BE DONE. RIFAI EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD
CANVASSED WITH A NUMBER OF THE MAJOR ARAB STATES
AT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING AND ALL OF THEM HAD
AGREED NOW WAS TIME TO GET THE ARABS TO PROVIDE
SOME SUPPORT FOR THE REFUGEES. HE SAID HE DID
THIS ON THE BASIS THE ARABS COULD PUT \$15 TO \$20
MILLION INTO EXTRA CONTRIBUTIONS FOR UNESCO WHICH

WOULD THEN BE, EVERYONE UNDERSTOOD, FUNNELED
TO UNRWA FOR ITS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. THIS WOULD
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HELP TO STAVE OFF AND PERHAPS EVEN ELIMINATE ANY
CUTBACK IN UNRWA SUPPORT FOR THE REFUGEES IN
JORDAN AND ELSEWHERE THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST.
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